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ETHNOGRAPHIC SURVEY OF AFRICA
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EAST CENTRAL AFRICA
PART I

PEOPLES OF THE LAKE NYASA REGION

BY

MARY TEW

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IV. NORTH NYASA REGION

NGONDE, NYAKYUSA, KINGA

TRIBAL AND SUB-TRIBAL GROUPINGS AND DEMOGRAPHY

[01]

Nomenclature

The whole group of Nyakyusa and related peoples were formerly called *Mambwe*.[1] The *Ngonde* people are sometimes spelt *Nkonde*, and once at least have been referred to as the 'Chungu',[2] presumably meaning the people of Chungu (the title of their paramount chief). The *Nyakyusa* are sometimes spelt *Nyakiusa* and sometimes referred to by the names of some of their branches, e.g. *Sovia* (also spelt *Sokya*, *Sokye*) or *Mwamba*. They are also called *Sukuma* (or *Sochile*). Some other members constituting this group have names with variant spellings which will be indicated below.

Grouping

The Ngonde and Nyakyusa are immigrants from the east into the area they now inhabit. By tradition they are offshoots of the same stock as the *Kinga* in the Livingstone mountains. From this stock the *Ina* (or *Iha*) and the *Nyamwanga* (*Mwamwanga* or *Nimwanga*) chiefs are also said to derive. The Kinga are thought to be related to the *Wangi* of the north and to the *Pangwa* in the Pangwa mountains. The *Matengo*, south of the Rukuhu river, are probably related to the Pangwa.

(a) *Kinga* inhabit the Livingstone mountains on the eastern shores of Lake Nyasa in Njombe district, Tanganyika.

(b) *Nyakyusa* are in Tanganyika in Rungwe district, with a recent immigrant section in Mbeya district. They inhabit the northern shores of Lake Nyasa, the western as far as the Songwe river, and the eastern as far as the Livingstone mountains. The *Mwamba* (also called *Lungulu*) in Rungwe district are a branch of the Nyakyusa. The name Nyakyusa covers three sections: *Nyakyusa* proper, *Kukwe*, and *Sokya*.[3]

(c) *Ngonde* are in Nyasaland, in the plain on the west lake shore, between the lower reaches of the north Rukuru river and the Songwe.

(d) *Nyamwanga* and *Ina* live in Abercorn and Kasama districts, Northern Rhodesia. The Nyamwanga in the hills at the north-eastern sources of the Chambezi river, and spreading into Tanganyika Territory; the Ina on the watershed between Chambezi and the Luangwa river sources.

In addition to these five tribes, who claim historically to be of one stock, there are numerous small groups, living in semi-isolated conditions in the surrounding mountains east and west of the north end of Lake Nyasa. These areas have never been surveyed. It is not certain when the Ngonde came into their present country,[4] but they came as immigrants into already inhabited land; according to Wilson, their neighbours, the

[1] Kerr-Cross, 1891. [2] Stewart, 1881.
[3] Wilson, J., 1938, p. 10.
[4] Wilson, J., 1938, p. 11, makes no attempt to date their first arrival; Murray, 1932, p. 208, says that they appear to have inhabited the country as far back as can be traced with any degree of historical accuracy.

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Sukwa, Wenya, Lambya, are politically subordinate, but culturally distinct.[1] They are probably remnants of the original inhabitants of the country. But Wilson also mentions elsewhere that the *Ndali* and *Lambya* of the upper Songwe river are two cultural groups closely related to the Nyakyusa.[2] We know that many of the small independent neighbours of the Ngonde are related to each other (*Tambo, Wandya, and Pangwa*),[3] their political independence being mainly due to the mountainous nature of their country.[4] Many of their names, which we take to represent distinct tribes, are merely locality names,[5] and some of the names which appear on the Tribal Map of East Africa represent only very small groups of people: for example, the *Tambo*, between the Iwa and the Lusangwa river, were estimated in 1911 to be only 500 altogether.[6] These peoples are most probably remnants of the original Tumbuka[7] cluster, and through them belong to the Nyanja-Cewa group; some of them may possibly have been forerunners of the *Bisa-Senga* immigration from the Congo, or they may have affiliations with the tribes of Tanganyika, *Fipa or Safwa*. It is unprofitable, on the existing information, to speculate on their original ethnic grouping, and impossible, without a survey in the country itself, to discover their present cultural affinities. At present their geographical position is the only reason for grouping them together in the Ngonde cluster. The *Henga* to the south of the Ngonde are an exception. Their arrival in the country is a matter of historical knowledge,[8] and they certainly belong, not to the Ngonde, but to the Tumbuka cluster.

Similar difficulties are found on the east side of Lake Nyasa. The *Wanji* and *Poroto* north of the Kinga, the *Pangwa* and *Matengo* on the south, and small tribes on the lake coast, the *Kisi, Sundwa, Mpoto*, &c., appear as names on the maps, but little else is known of them.

Dr. Meinhard considers that the Nyamwanga and Iwa on the west, and the Kinga and Pangwa on the east, are culturally too dissimilar to be counted in the same group with the Ngonde and Nyakyusa.[9] However, information about these peoples is so scanty that it has been necessary in any case to base this report on the Ngonde and Nyakyusa,[10] which have been studied by Godfrey Wilson.

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631

History

So far as available information is concerned, only the history of the Ngonde has been recorded, and it would also seem as if this is the only one of the related groups which has developed a centralized political system, except the Nyamwanga and Iwa. The Nyakyusa, as they spread westwards, were ruled by a number of petty chiefs, each of whom was succeeded by two or more sons, who carved out separate chiefdoms in the area into which they were expanding. There was no paramount political authority, but a number of tiny chiefdoms, none of which to-day exceeds 3,000 adult males, and most of which are far smaller than that. To-day about 100 traditionally

[1] Wilson, L., 1950, p. 7.

[2] On the other hand, the *Mbeya District Notebook* records that the Lambya are related to the Nyakyusa, and the Nyika have affinities with the Lambya, but the *Ndali* are of a different origin.

[3] Cruttenden, 1914, pp. 3 and 58. [4] Gouldsbury and Sheane, 1911, p. 10.

[5] Nyirenda, 1951 (footnote by Young, T. C.). [6] Gouldsbury and Sheane, 1911, p. 10.

[7] See Young, T. C., 1, 1950, p. 60: 'Far back in the hills . . . there exists still a Nyika people whose speech has been much less interfered with by the newcomers, and which apart from dissimilarity in tone and accent, is not far removed from Tumbuka-Kamanga speech.'

[8] Langard, 1893, vol. i, p. 51. [9] Professor M. Wilson corroborates this.

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175 631 independent chiefs have been grouped into eleven court districts, with one chief as President of the Native Court in each. These chiefs, with two presidents of the Ndali and Lambya courts, are federated, and possess one Appeal Court and joint Native Treasury between them.[1]

The following is a summary of the history of the Ngonde, south of the Songwe river:

173 Ngonde tradition records that about one years ago a chief of the Kinga, Ngulowe, had two grandsons, Lwembe (from whom descended the Nyakyusa) and Chewere (from whom came the Ngonde, the Iwa, and the Nyasawanga).[2] Chewere left Ukinga and wandered west and south as far as Nkamanga, the capital of the Tumbuka country, returning thence to capture Mbande from Simbawe, the indigenous chief.[3] After this the local chiefs accepted him as their overlord, and he confirmed their status with public gifts of cloth, much as Mlowoka had done with the Tumbuka. There is little information about these earlier inhabitants, but it seems likely that they were similar to the Tumbuka, before the latter were conquered by Mlowoka.[4] There is an old tradition that Mlowoka and Chewere knew each other in their former home, and that their meeting at Nkamanga was as one between equals, at which the boundaries between their territories were formally arranged. According to Tonga tradition certain details of the accompanying ritual and the fact of his prior arrival show Mlowoka to have been recognized by Chewere as a higher authority, but this interpretation together with the circumstantial evidence are repudiated by the Ngonde tradition.[5]

175 Opinions differ as to the actual date of the arrival of the first Ngonde ruler, Kyungu. He came accompanied by five leading men, and was accepted as overlord by the local chiefs. The latter, with the immigrants, formed a class of hereditary nobles, *amafumbale*, who divided into two groups according to whether they lived at Mbande (*the nobles of Ngonde*)[6] or whether they lived at a distance (*territorial nobles*).[7] later immigrants joined one or the other group. These nobles ruled the country. The Kyungus, enriched by the ivory trade, were credited with divine powers, and lived in strict religious seclusion. Most of their male children were killed at birth by the nobles of Ngonde, and if they themselves fell sick they were killed. A constitutional change took place after the accession of the tenth Kyungu, Mwangonde: the killing of the sons of the Kyungu was stopped, and such was the prestige of the royal blood that they began to displace the territorial nobles as rulers. The sons of the Kyungu became hereditary chiefs, *amanyifumbe*, each of whom was succeeded by two or more sons, who divided the territory between them as the Nyakyusa do. Each territorial noble was succeeded by only one heir. The effect of this branching of new chiefdoms was to create a number of hierarchies of small chiefdoms under one head, the great chief.[8] The relation of these political units to each other, and to the central authority at Mbande, will be considered in the section on Social Organization.

When the Ngoni first attacked the Ngonde, Mwakasungula was the first Kyungu

[1] Wilson, L. 1938, pp. 10–13, gives seven districts, but the number has been increased.
[2] Ibid., L. 1939, p. 9; Mackenzie, 1925, pp. 20–3; Young, T. C., c. 1932, p. 38.
[3] Mackenzie, 1925, pp. 329–6. [4] Young, T. C., c. 1932, pp. 60–1.
[5] Ibid., pp. 57–60; Young also believes that they originally came from the River Chiri, near Lake Chiri (1932, p. 56).
[6] Wilson's terminology. [7] Wilson, L. 1939, p. 9; Mackenzie, 1925, pp. 68–9.

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to take up arms and lead the people to fight. The Ngoni were temporarily beaten off, but at a later attack the Ngonde, under Gwa Sapasi, submitted. By 1875 he had been succeeded by Mwalongo, who was Kyungu at the time of the first visit of the Europeans. By that time, Arab slave- and ivory-traders had established themselves in Ngonde, and for the next twenty years they disputed the territory with the Europeans. After Dr. Law's voyage to Ngonde in 1875 a Free Church of Scotland Mission station and a post of the African Lakes Corporation were set up at Karonga. The Arabs sometimes traded with the Ngonde and sometimes fought them. In one fight the Kyungu Mwalongo was killed and Mwakalumbo was elected in his place. The agent of the African Lakes Corporation tried to protect the people against the Arabs, and barely succeeded in maintaining his own position, until in 1889 H. H. Johnston made treaties with the chiefs and Arabs in Ngonde, and the country came into the sphere of influence of the British South Africa Company. In 1895 Mlozi, the leading Arab, who had not accepted British rule, was caught and hanged, and Ngonde was incorporated in the British Protectorate of Central Africa.

The inter-territorial boundary between Nyasaland and German East Africa (now Tanganyika Territory) cut across the area of the Kyungu's influence, which used to extend some fifteen miles north of the Songwe river, and some of the western territories were included in Northern Rhodesia.

The new government forbade elephant hunting without licence, and so killed the ivory trade, a main source of revenue; taxes were collected, and small subsidies paid out of them to selected chiefs and nobles. Mwakalinga, who became Kyungu in 1904, was the first Kyungu to sit with his people judging their cases. After his death the nobles chose Mwangulube to succeed him, and in his reign the custom of hoeing (*milowa*) for the Kyungu lapsed till 1927, when it was revived in a modified form by the next Kyungu, Peter. The latter was the younger brother of Mwangulube, and acted as his assistant in 1912 and as regent in 1927, succeeding to the full position of Kyungu in 1932. He had made a private fortune in industry and used it consistently to maintain his public position. He left Mbande, the traditional capital which had been dominated by the nobles of Ngonde, and built a new one at Ibwiko, half-way between Mbande and the government Boma at Karonga.[1]

Distribution

Ngonde. In 1931 the Ngonde population had increased from 18,852 in 1921 to 30,732, or by 63 per cent. In 1945 it again doubled itself, reaching the figure of 62,136. The average density in the district is under fifteen per square mile.[2]

Nyakyusa country is thickly populated in the south around the lake-shore plain. Its density is about six times as great as that of Ngonde country.[3]

In recent years there has been a large movement of Nyakyusa from Rungwe district into Mbeya district, into the more east and west of Mbeya, where the average density is over 200 persons to the square mile, with a maximum of over 400 to the square mile in one village near Mbeya.[4]

[1] Wilson, S. 1938, pp. 67-9; Mackenzie, 1925, pp. 23-5; Monteiro, 2, 1929, pp. 7 and 234-42; Livingstone, 1901, pp. 237 ff.; Laws, 1894, pp. 100-04; Du Plessis, 1912, pp. 296-302; Johnston, 1897 pp. 32-6; Legard, 1893, vol. i, pp. 42-53, and 130-2; Duff, 1905, p. 20.

[2] 1931 and 1945 Census, p. 25.

[3] *Handbook of Common East Africa*, p. 68; Wilson, S. 1938, p. 7.

[4] Hall, 1945.

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The *Nyamwanga* and *Iwa* of Abercorn and Masama districts, Northern Rhodesia, are in areas where the density is between 4 and 7 per square mile, and they number less than 20,000.[1]

Tanganyika Peoples[2]

Tribe	District	Total population	Total children	Percentage of children to adults	Percentage of males to females		Increase since 1921
					Adults	Children	
Kukwe	Rungwe	68,197	29,934	74	51	110	..
Seria	Mbeya	10,755	..	..	..	..	..
Nyakyusa	Rungwe	80,092	37,799	..	..	..	..
	Mbeya	2,957	1,030	..	..	..	..
	Other districts	775	551	87	57	102	34.57[6]

Populations of less than 50,000 Persons

Tribe	District	Total population
Kinga	Njombe	27,036
Lambya	Rungwe	12,403
Ndali	Rungwe	22,834
Nyamwanga	Mbeya	10,147
Nyika	Mbeya and Ufipa	25,179
Pangwa	Njombe	20,533
Wanji	Njombe	20,397
Wanda	Mbeya and Ufipa	5,754

LINGUISTIC DATA

According to Doke's classification *Ngonde* is one of the five important languages of the east central sub-zone of Bantu languages, and is spoken in Tanganyika to the north end of Lake Nyasa, where it is known as *Nyakyusa*.[3] In language as well as culture, the Ngonde of Nyasaland are identical with the Nyakyusa of Tanganyika.[4] According to Guthrie's classification, many of the tribes, whose affiliation is not known on cultural or historical grounds, may be attached, on linguistic grounds, to speakers of the Tumbuka group of languages: *Wenya*, *Lambia*, and *Wandia*.[5]

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

The *Kinga* inhabit the inaccessible heights of the north and west portion of the Livingstone mountains, which rise to 10,000 ft.[6]

Nyakyusa country is bounded on the south by Lake Nyasa and the Songwe river, on the east by the wall of the Livingstone range, and on the west by the Ndali hills. They live between the two walls of the Great Rift valley. In the north the rift is interrupted and closed by the extinct volcano Rungwe (10,000 ft.), from whose base the land drops in hills and little plateaux to the lake-shore plain. The soil is not very rich,

[1] Orde Brown, 1, 1938, maps.
[2] *Census of the Native Population*, 1931, Tables VI and VII.
[3] Doke, 1945, p. 66.
[4] Wilson, 5, 1939, p. 8.
[5] Guthrie, 1948, p. 81.
[6] Du Plessis, 1929, p. 323.

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137 especially in the north, but as between 100 and 130 in. of rain usually falls annually, [132] the country is one of the most fertile parts of Tanganyika. Two crops a year are often grown on the same patch of ground. There is no tsetse, and cattle flourish. Parts of the country are stony and mountainous, others, especially the lake-shore plain, are of deep soil. On the higher ground there are many old volcanic craters filled with rich, moist soil, more fertile than the surrounding land.[1]

131 *Ngonde* country is bounded by Lake Nyasa on the east and by the Misuko hills on 132 the west. It is mountainous except for a belt of low-lying country, about 6–10 miles wide, along the lake shore. The whole district is well watered and well wooded except for some of the higher peaks and the lake plains. Banana-trees are cultivated throughout the district. Game is plentiful. Average annual rainfall at Karonga in 1922–32 was 41·2 in. Average mean temperature was 74° F., seldom rising above 95° F.[2]

MAIN FEATURES OF ECONOMY

Cultivation

000 The *Kinga* are agriculturists, cultivating wheat, peas, and potatoes, and latterly also oats and barley. They own a moderate amount of cattle, and many sheep and goats. They are skilful smiths.[3] The *Kisi* and *Sandia* around the north-west coast of the lake are fishermen and agriculturists, growing some millet and maize.[4] The *Nyika* are agriculturists and cattle-rearers; the *Lambia* do not rear much cattle; the *Ndali* have large herds, and cultivate bananas in the valleys.[5] The *Nyamwanga* keep sheep and goats and grow maize, beans, and millet.[6]

The *Matengo* have a system of hill-side cultivation of their own, which prevents erosion. When forced into concentrations in the caves in Litembo and Langiro to escape the Ngoni raids, they developed the pit-system of hoeing: the grass is cut and laid in 2-ft. wide lines in a grid of 6-ft. squares. The hole in the middle of the square is hoed by a woman, who throws up the earth on to the grass squares. The crops are planted in the raised beds and weeds are thrown into the pit to rot, forming compost for the following year. After one season the pit becomes the raised bed and the beds the pit, and the system is repeated in following years. With proper succession of crops the gardens may be kept in use for ten years before fertility begins to fail. Maize, millet, and wheat flourish; root crops do not thrive under this system, nor does tobacco. The pit-system is now found mainly at Litembo, and is being abandoned elsewhere.[7]

241 The *Ngonde* and *Nyakyusa* are primarily cattle-rearers and banana-cultivators. They have a very similar culture, but only the latter has been described in detail. Consequently the following summary refers to the Nyakyusa, unless the contrary is indicated.

The Nyakyusa practise subsistence agriculture by intensive cultivation with rotation of crops. As wide shifting cultivation is not practised, villages are relatively stable. They grow a great quantity of crops—maize, millet, sweet potatoes, beans, ground-nuts, cow-peas, cassava, and rice in the plain. Grass is hoed in for manure. The *Sukuma*, in the Misuko hill area (Ngonde country), grow field-peas and wheat on a small scale.[8]

[1] Wilson, 3, 1938, pp. 5–6.
[2] *Handbook of German East Africa*, p. 64.
[3] Ibid., pp. 66–7.
[4] Murray, 1932, pp. 201–3; Dixey, 1928.
[5] Ibid., pp. 62–3.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Pike, 1938.
[8] Murray, 1932, p. 207.

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241 The use of cattle dung as manure is a novelty now used in the cultivation of coffee, but not on gardens unless land is beginning to be scarce. Banana cultivation is a characteristic feature of Ngonde as well as of Nyakyusa economic life.[1] Each homestead in a village includes the houses of a man and his wives, his banana groves, coffee-trees planted under the bananas, and also plots of beans, ground-nuts, &c. The main gardens of the household lie at some distance. Each year different types of gardens are hoed together by groups of villagers, millet in one place, maize and beans in another, so that the main gardens of any particular household are scattered. The clearing and hoeing fall to the man and his sons, and the wives are then given portions of their own to plant. Traditionally women never used to hoe at all.

The rights of a woman to dispose of her crops vary. Millet and rice, the two most valuable crops, are stored by the man and belong to him. The woman is the effective owner of all other crops on her plot, and stores them in her own house. Crops are used for food, beer, and hospitality, for making gifts, as well as for sale or barter, to obtain salt, pots, clothes, and cattle. There is a sharp division of property between co-wives. Not only garden land, but also banana-trees are divided between them. The husband often keeps a separate plot of bananas and cassava over which he has full rights of ownership. The farming unit is the family, but communal hoeing parties are organized two or three times a year, food and beer being offered to the workers.[2]

243 On the lake-shore plain rice is cultivated. The Ngonde plain is the main rice-growing area of Nyasaland. Floods in the rainy season make possible the cultivation of lowland rice, or paddy, which is superior in yield to upland grown crops. The most fertile areas are usually flooded during the rainy period of December–April, so as to be unfitted for the cultivation of other food crops at that time. But the Ngonde construct huge mound-like ridges in their newly harvested rice gardens, and plant on them subsidiary crops—maize, beans, sweet potatoes, cassava, or cotton. When these are harvested the garden is levelled again in readiness for another rice crop. Harvesting of rice and winnowing is usually women's work.[3] The crops are stored when threshed but unhulled, or unthreshed. They are milled by pestle and mortar. The rice is marketed with Indian traders in Blantyre and Limbe townships.[4]

Cattle

231 Cattle take a foremost place in *Ngonde* economy, and milk is an important article of diet. Ngonde herdsmen were much in request in Shire province.[5]

Nyakyusa cattle are tied up at night in the dwelling houses,[6] and are herded in the day by small boys. Milking is invariably done by the men; the women are not allowed to have anything to do with cattle.[7] Every year at the end of the dry season, in October or November, some of the pastures are fired to bring out the new shoots at the first rains. This is the only use of burning in their economy.[8] The rinderpest outbreak of 1896 decimated the herds,[9] but since then the number of cattle has increased considerably, numbering over 33,000 head in 1931 and about 40,000 head in 1938,

[1] Murray, 1932, p. 202.
[2] Barker, 1934.
[3] Wilson, 3, 1938, pp. 16–29.
[4] Murray, 1932, p. 206.
[5] Johnston, 1897, p. 431; Murray, 1932, pp. 205 and 209.
[6] Murray, 1932, p. 209, states that Ngonde cattle and herdsmen sleep together in long rectangular huts.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Wilson, 3, 1938, p. 8.
[9] Johnston, 1897, p. 431.

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231 according to the *Bell Report*. Cattle and hides are exported to Tanganyika.[1] The *Nyamwanga* herds were reduced, partly by Bemba raids, and partly by rinderpest.[2]

Domestic Architecture

341 *Ngonde* homesteads are famous in Nyasaland for their peculiar style and neatness
361 of execution. They are made of bamboos, specially grown for the purpose. They are oblong, with the ends slightly tapering upwards so that they present a ship-like appearance. The huts are erected in two lines facing each other, at a distance of about 30 yards. This centre street is kept scrupulously clean.[3] The *Nyakusa* live in round or long huts of bamboo or grass.[4] *Kinga* homesteads are scattered; they live in round huts of bamboo and straw.[5] The *Iwa* formerly lived in large stockaded villages, but these are now broken up.[6]

Specialization and Trade

326 The Ngonde were accomplished iron-workers; iron was dug, smelted, and made into hoes and spears.[7] The Iwa were formerly noted as iron-workers. Both they and the Nyamwanga grow tobacco on a large scale.[8]

286 A rough kind of cloth was made on native looms. The Ngonde made hollowed
501 canoes, but were not good sailors. In fishing they used poison, hooks, nets, and traps.
226 Pottery and basket-making were carried on.[9]

[M] The Ngonde were the most civilized of this cluster of tribes, owing to their closer
437 contact with Arab and Swahili traders who used the lake as a waterway.[10] The Nyam-
643 wanga also had opportunities of contact with Arab and Swahili traders at the south end of Lake Tanganyika,[11] but information about the effect of this on their economic life is lacking. By comparison with the Ngonde the Nyakyusa were isolated from contact with the outside world,[12] and this is probably true of the other tribes of the group. Among the Ngonde, in spite of the political hierarchy and central religious authority of Kyungu, economic links between separate local groups were few. The ivory trade was a source of wealth for the Kyungu and for the nobles of Ngonde at Mbande, but its benefits had a strictly limited effect on the rest of the people. The economic links between the capital and the chiefdoms followed the lines of the political system. The income of Kyungu in slaves and cattle depended on the judicial process and on warfare. He had a semi-monopoly of the ivory of the country (the right tusk of every elephant killed was his). His expenditure consisted of entertainment for all important visitors to the capital, and gifts of cloths, obtained through the ivory trade, to nobles and chiefs. The first Kyungu gave head-cloths to the indigenous rulers, who, in accepting them, accepted his overlordship, and the practice was continued every time a new chief or territorial noble succeeded to office. The nobles of Ngonde got cloths every time the Arab traders came. Chiefs bringing food to Mbande, the capital, were

[1] *Bell Report*, pp. 100–3; Aplin, 1931.
[2] Kerr-Cross, 1894; Murray, 1932, pp. 210–11.
[3] Ibid., p. 64.
[4] Mackenzie, 1925, pp. 146–8; Kerr-Cross, 1894, p. 189.
[5] Gouldsbury and Sheane, 1911, p. 12.
[6] *Handbook of German East Africa*, p. 68.
[7] Gouldsbury and Sheane, 1911, p. 12.
[8] Wilson, 5, 1939, p. 44.
[9] Mackenzie, 1925, pp. 148, 149, 151–2.
[10] Coxhead, 1914, p. 44.
[11] Ibid., 3, 1938, p. 15.
[12] Ibid., 5, 1939, p. 44.

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439 643 given a slave or cow in return. Those who performed hoeing service, *milasa*, were entertained with food and beer.

622 437 The ivory trade, although it bound the local rulers to the capital, involved no tribal organization of elephant hunts, and scarcely touched the common people, who never obtained the imported cloths exchanged for ivory, but continued to dress in bark-cloth or in their coarse home-woven cloth. Between each chief and his people economic links were determined on the one hand by his power of requisitioning food, and his greater wealth derived from the higher bride-price given for his daughters, and on the other by his people's expectation of entertainment from him in return for their food. Economic links between local chiefdoms were tenuous. Subsistence agriculture was practised by each family with the help of village neighbours and a few friends and kin; marriage with its economic exchanges was usually within the chiefdom. Of the few specialized craftsmen, representatives of each were usually found in each local group.[1]

439 433 Under modern economic conditions, Ngonde country is the only part of north Nyasaland which cannot be called the 'Dead North', and does not suffer from excessive migration. The soil is fertile and at present there is no land shortage, though there is likelihood of one developing in the near future. Food is cultivated for export to the Lupa goldfields in Tanganyika, which is the natural market for Ngonde produce. Rice, cattle, and hides are also exported there. Parts of the lake littoral are suitable for cotton cultivation, which was revived in 1934. Ninety tons were sold in 1936. Out of the total effective male population of 12,000, 3,000 grow 'economic crops', and 7,000 grow cash crops only.[2] There are two European coffee estates in the Misuku hills, but they are handicapped by the long dry season.[3] Money is also derived from the fishing industry. An attempt to develop a ghee industry from native butter for sale to Indians in Nyasaland collapsed owing to the apathy of the Ngonde, their neglect of quality, and their insistence on too high a price for their inferior product. The main cash income of the district is derived from emigration to the Lupa goldfields, so that 90 per cent. of the money in circulation in the district is East African currency, which is accepted by the Nyasaland local government, surplus balances being remitted to the District Officer at Tukuyu, Tanganyika.[4]

Periodic Migrations

167 Long-distance labour migration is not a serious problem among the Ngonde, as they are able to earn their main cash income by working in the nearby Lupa goldfields, or by supplying that market with agricultural produce. In north Nyasa district (Ngonde), of 12,052 adult males fit to work for wages, only 11·6 per cent. are labour emigrants, and of these in 1937 only 100 were counted as 'lost ones' (i.e. not heard of since 1930).[5] In Abercorn and Kasama districts, Northern Rhodesia, where the Nyamwanga and Iwa live, 50 per cent. of the able-bodied male adult population is absent.[6]

A local migration of Nyakyusa does constitute a problem for the Tanganyika administration. Up to 1935 some 2,000 families had migrated from Rungwe district to tribal lands in the neighbouring chiefdoms of Mbeya district. By 1941 the figure had increased to 3,000. The immigrants now total 17 per cent. of the whole population

[1] Wilson, 5, 1939, pp. 39–50.
[2] Murray, 1932, p. 206.
[3] *Bell Report*, 1938, Appendix A.
[4] *Bell Report*, 1938, pp. 102–3.
[5] Smith, 1937, p. 21.
[6] Orde Browne, 1, 1938, maps.

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167 of the new area. Their culture differs from that of the indigenous tribes, so that they remain largely unassimilated. The cause of the exodus is partly shortage of land;[1] the Nyakyusa are skilled cultivators; the active soil-conservation campaign promoted by the Agricultural Department in Rungwe district involved farmers in additional effort, so that land in Mbeya was attractive in so far as the soil conservation scheme only started there two years later. The main motive, however, was to shorten the transport haul between the farmer and the market at Lupa. The demand for supplies of beans and grain from Rungwe district was decreasing even before the 1939 war, partly because production on the goldfields was declining, and partly because the produce of Mbeya district was increasing (largely through the work of the immigrant Nyakyusa farmers). The main problems for the administration arising from the Nyakyusa immigration into Mbeya district is the lack of control by the Native Authorities and congestion in the river valleys. The Safwa, who vacated the valleys of the Nsofwe and Mbalizi rivers after their wars with the Sangu, retreated into the hills before the flood of Nyakyusa immigrants, who now populate the valleys almost exclusively with their own compact endogamous groups.[2]

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

Kinship and Local Grouping

621 561 (The following section is compiled from information applying equally to Nyakyusa and Ngonde.)

The distinctive feature of the social organization is the system of age-villages. An age-village consists of a male age-group with wives of any age and children. When a man dies his heir may come to live in his village, and strangers applying for land are never refused on grounds of age, but the original constitution of the village is based on the principle of identity of age. Up to the age of ten years the small boys herd cattle in groups. Then they start to hoe for their fathers, and leave their fathers' houses to go to sleep with friends. After two or three years they build for themselves in an age-village of young men. They continue to hoe the fields and eat the food of their mothers until marriage, after which they hoe mainly for themselves, on land adjacent to their own huts.[3]

602 If a young man, instead of hoeing, goes out to work, he is expected to bring back tax-money for his father. By his service he earns the right to be given cattle for marriage. A young man whose father is poor in cattle will often attach himself to the household of a rich kinsman, brother of his father or mother, and hoe regularly for him, eventually receiving from him a large portion of his marriage cattle.[4] Sons-in-law are expected to bring their friends now and again to hoe for their father-in-law, who will afterwards entertain the workers.[5]

[611] Descent and inheritance are patrilineal, but there are no clans, and no descent group with a common name and definite membership.[6] The sons of a group of effective kinsmen are not all themselves effective kinsmen, and in the third generation the bonds of kinship may often have been forgotten. Cattle exchanges signalize the most

[1] Wilson, 3, 1938, p. 7.
[2] Wilson, 1, 1936, p. 78.
[3] Ibid., p. 28.
[4] Hall, 1945.
[5] Ibid., p. 29.
[6] Ibid., 2, 1936, p. 267; 4, 1939, p. 2.

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602 important relationships of kinship and affinity. Marriage cattle are not kept by the bride's father, but are distributed by him among her brothers for their marriages, and among his own brothers and half-brothers, who in turn give him cattle when their own daughters marry.

595 Half-brothers do not generally exchange cattle, but unless they do so there are no strong bonds of kinship between them. A polygynist usually creates the relationship of 'milking each other's cows', between his senior son and the eldest of each group of full-brothers by his other wives. He gives some of the marriage cows received for a daughter to one of her half-brothers, the latter being placed under an obligation to return the cows to the girl's eldest full brother some day from the marriage cattle of a sister or daughter of his own. The exchange once begun usually continues as sisters and daughters marry, and only lapses in the third generation, unless the principals quarrel and take legal action for 'separation'. Then a balance is drawn up of the cows exchanged from the beginning of the relationship, and the kinship is broken. The two thus 'separated' have no mutual obligations and do not attend each other's funerals.

602 428 Half-brothers may be linked by blood if their mothers are close kin; they may also be linked by cattle exchanges. The laws of inheritance make the full brothers of a man his first heirs, then his half-brothers linked by blood, then those linked by cattle have precedence over other half-brothers.[1]

604 The bond between a man and his mother's brother is expressed in terms of the passage of cattle. As the mother's brother married with the mother's cattle, her eldest son has the right to make free with his property in his lifetime, the right to receive one cow to set up a herd of his own, and a residuary right of inheritance; if the mother's brother dies without heir, her son can claim the particular wife obtained with and the particular progeny of the cattle given for his own mother.

606 There is a strict custom of father and daughter-in-law avoidance. A woman may never speak to, approach, or look at her husband's father, on pain of death through the witchcraft of indignant neighbours. The prohibition is extended from her own father-in-law to all his classificatory brothers, and is the basis of the age-village system.[2] A man must also avoid his mother-in-law, but this prohibition is relaxed after the birth of a child.[3] The affinal relationship is also expressed by the obligation of a man to bring a cow to the funeral of his wife's father or brother, and to give one at the death of his own son-in-law. The former may count as part of his marriage payments in case of a claim for refund.[4]

601 The main kinship terms are as follows:

Ndamu = brother-in-law or sister-in-law; used by a man for all husbands of his 'sisters', all 'brothers' of his wives, and for the son of his wife's brother, since he has a right to marry that man's sister; by a woman for all wives of her 'brothers' and all 'sisters' of her husband.

Nhogho = parent-in-law or child-in-law; used for the husband of a daughter, or for the parent of a wife or husband (a daughter-in-law is called by the special name of *Nhamwamu*). The wife of the wife's brother is called *Nhogho*, as she is the mother of a potential wife, and of a brother-in-law.

[1] Wilson, 2, 1936, p. 265; 4, 1939, p. 2.
[2] Ibid., 2, 1936, pp. 267–8; Mackenzie, 1925, pp. 45 and 106.
[3] Sanderson, 3, 1923, p. 454.
[4] Wilson, 4, 1939.

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601 *Mwinukulu* = grandparent or grandchild; but a man addresses his male grandparents as *Mwinangu* (my compeer) and his female grandparents as *Nkazi* (wife). A woman addresses her male grandparents as *Ndume* (husband) and her female grandparents as *Mwinangu* (my compeer).

Ndume = husband, extended for a woman to include the husbands of 'sisters', male grandparents, male grandchildren, husbands of female grandparents or grandchildren; all 'brothers' of a husband, husband of a father's sister, and grandfathers of a husband, and finally, the husband's sister's son.

Nkazi = wife; for a man it includes the wives of 'brothers', female grandparents and grandchildren, or wives of male ones; all sisters of wife, daughters of wife's brothers, wives of grandsons by marriage, the 'grandmothers' of a wife, and the wife of a maternal uncle.[1]

605 The Ngonde do not seem to distinguish cross-cousins from ortho-cousins as clearly as do the Maravi, or the Yao, Makua, and Makonde peoples.

Marriage

582 There are no exogamous clans, but the descendants of a common grandfather (either paternal or maternal) are forbidden to marry.[2] The descendants of a common great-grandfather are supposed not to marry, but sometimes they do so before the relationship is discovered; they then simply drink a special medicine, but do not break the marriage. The old men speak of a now abandoned custom of preferential cross-cousin marriage.[3] The husband of the eldest girl of a family has the prior right to marry her full sisters, and such marriages are very common. A man also has the right to marry the daughter of his wife's brother, therefore the wife of the wife's brother is classed as a parent-in-law in kinship terminology.[4]

583 The passage of cattle makes children of a marriage legitimate. A child of a man who has given no cattle belongs either to the mother's husband or to her father. Cattle are in rapid circulation. Few men possess more than six cows at any time, yet marriage payments range from four to thirty cows (formerly only one or two were given). Marriage involves considerable expenditure and months of preliminary economic activity.[5] The cattle are seldom handed over all at once, but in ones or twos over a period of years. Full brothers have a claim to the cattle of their sister's marriage, and at the marriage of his eldest daughter the father hands one of the cows to the village headman.[6]

584 A girl commonly goes to visit and sleep with her betrothed husband for several years before she finally sets up house for him. The ideal procedure is by negotiation with the girl's father, but a man without cows may run off with a girl and satisfy her father with cows later on, or a man with cattle may seduce a married woman and pay her husband the adultery fine of two cows, plus the cows originally given for her marriage. A girl may be betrothed before puberty, and may visit her husband, but she is supposed to be virgin at her initiation ceremony, and is generally not allowed to

[1] Sanderson, 3, 1923. [2] Mackenzie, 1925, p. 55.

[3] See Wilson, 2, 1936, p. 267; but according to Sanderson, 3, 1923, p. 453, cross-cousins are classed as sisters, and all first cousins are unmarriageable; according to Johnston, 1897, p. 415, and to Mackenzie 1925, p. 55, cousin marriage was not allowed.

[4] Wilson, 2, 1936, p. 262; Sanderson, op. cit., p. 451.

[5] Wilson and Hunter, 1939, p. 11. [6] Mackenzie, 1925, p. 65.

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584 live with her husband until at least three cows have been given. One of the bulls is only given if the girl is virgin at her initiation rite, and this bull is given to her mother. The laws of inheritance and the system of marriage by cattle payments ensures that cattle will be in the hands of the older men. In general polygynists are men over forty-five.[1]

595 The first wife married is the chief wife, and is entitled to respect and obedience from her co-wives. Her first son is her husband's ultimate heir. A man cannot lightly divorce his first wife during the lifetime of his own father who provided the cattle
586 with which she was married. Divorce is effected by the return of the marriage cattle. Usually the woman has a lover who will pay cows to redeem her; if she refuses to go back to her husband there is no means of compelling her to do so, though in pre-European times her father and the chief might send her back. In such a case the husband would be entitled to his original payments plus their increase.[2] Men do not demand divorce for adultery unless it is persistent.[3] Divorce is often sought for very trivial reasons.[4] If the paternal uncles have helped the groom to collect his marriage cattle, the beasts are redistributed to their original donors after they have been returned to the husband.[5]

587 A man whose wife dies can claim a substitute or the refund of his cattle. When a man dies his widows pass to his heir who takes them all as wives, if he is a brother of
768 the dead man; if the heir is a son he takes all except his own mother and the wives who are her close kin. Inherited wives have the same land rights as others.[6]

Inheritance

428 Brothers inherit before sons, then half-brothers (linked half-brothers before other half-brothers). When all the brothers are dead the property and wives of each pass to each one's eldest son.[7] This rule also applies to the Nyamwanga and Iwa.[8] The heir assumes the full obligations of father to his younger brothers and is responsible for their marriages; they hoe for him and are fed by his wives as are unmarried sons.[9] The sister's son only inherits if all near patrilineal kinsmen are dead or are infants.[10]

The above applies to commoners' inheritance only. For chiefs, succession and inheritance may follow different principles. For instance, in succession to local chiefdoms, two or more sons would divide the chiefdom. Among the Nganda the Kyungu and the great chiefs were not chosen according to strict genealogical right, but were selected from the appropriate families according to their wealth, generosity, and courage. In the succession to the great chiefdoms, there was formerly a difference of procedure in the two royal lines: that of Ngelenge, where the nobles of Ngonde were sent by the Kyungu to help to select the successor; that of Ngana, the line of the female side, where the nobles of Ngonde merely summoned the great commoners to discuss with them who was to succeed. Nowadays the difference between the two lines has disappeared, and the Ngelenge custom is followed for both. If the genealogical heir

[1] Wilson, 2, 1936, pp. 257–9.
[2] Wilson, 2, 1936, p. 263.
[3] Ibid., p. 65.
[4] Ibid., 2, 1936, pp. 264–6; Sanderson, 3, 1923, p. 453.
[5] Wilson, 3, 1938, pp. 11 and 28; Johnston, 1897, p. 472.
[6] Mackenzie, 1925, p. 55.
[7] Mackenzie, 1925, p. 92.
[8] Wilson, 3, 1938, p. 27.
[9] Cowhead, 1914, p. 45.
[10] Wilson, 5, 1939, p. 55.

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428 was set aside in succession, his right to inherit the property and widows was none the less undisputed.[1]

SLAVERY (AMONG THE NGONDE)

567 Slaves were obtained by the Kyungu and chiefs in warfare and as fines for offences. The Kyungu gave women slaves to his important chiefs, thus strengthening the kinship bonds between them and himself, for the recipient would regard the Kyungu as his father-in-law if he took the woman to wife, and her children would be counted as grandchildren of the Kyungu. The owner of a slave was obliged to find a spouse for him or her, and a male slave could rise to positions of importance.[2]

LAND TENURE

423 No individual can own land unless he himself either works it or is a full member of the local community. Rights to land are only rigorously defined in cases of scarce and
425 valuable land. Owing to witchcraft beliefs, movement from one place to another is constant. In taking up new land after a move, a stranger is granted land by the villagers acting through their great commoners, the chief being merely informed. Both chiefs and villagers welcome new-comers. If a man returns after absence to his own village he has a claim to enter into possession of his old building site and gardens. The claim varies in strength according to his relations with the villagers and the chief. If a man goes to a neighbouring village within a chiefdom, he can go on hoeing his old gardens, ownership depending on effective use.

Land suitable for bean and maize plots is the most valuable, as it is hoed continuously for years. Land for other crops is plentiful, so that if a man leaves a garden fallow for only two years anyone may cultivate it. The most scarce and valuable land is in the bottom of old volcanic craters, and in these cases rights are insisted upon, so that if a man moves to a new chiefdom, his next of kin claims his crater land. In other cases, when a man moves from a chiefdom, his old gardens revert to the joint ownership of villagers and chief. When a man dies his heir takes his wives, cattle, and movable property, but not his land, unless he comes to live in the village.

Rights in trees differ according to the types of trees and according to local custom. In some cases rights in trees are lost when a man moves away, in others the rights to valuable trees are claimed by the nearest kinsman in the neighbourhood. Now that chiefdoms are no longer in a state of potential war with each other, the group within which property is held is wider. Coffee-trees have been declared by the Federation of Chiefs to be the property of the original planter, even though he may have moved to another chiefdom. The Agricultural Officer takes over abandoned coffee-trees to tend them for pest control.

423 Pasture is jointly owned by the whole village group, no individual having exclusive rights in it.

No direct charge is made for the right to build or cultivate. Certain obligations are owed to a chief in view of his over-lordship, e.g. providing cooked food for ceremonies of the chief's own immediate family, but this obligation is reciprocal, the chief being expected in return to kill beasts to feed the people.[3]

[1] Wilson, 5, 1939, pp. 52–4.
[2] Wilson, 3, 1938, pp. 30–48; Mackenzie, 1925, p. 93.
[3] Ibid., p. 46; Mackenzie, 1925, pp. 38–40.

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POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

000 Only the *Ngonde*, the *Nyamwanga*, and the *Iwa* seem to have had any paramount authority. Of these, only that of the Ngonde has been described in detail. The Nyamwanga had a paramount chief, the Mukoma, living over the border in Tanganyika. Under him the Northern Rhodesian Nyamwanga were always ruled by his sister, the Waituika; directly under her were the headmen of villages. The Mukoma used to appoint his own sons or selected friends to be headmen of the larger villages. A nominal tribute, mainly fish, was sent by the Waituika to the Mukoma, and the latter could also command annual labour in his gardens. The Iwa also had a paramount chief, Kafwimbi, who recognized common ancestry with the Mukoma but paid him no tribute. His country was divided into two sections, under two sub-chiefs, Mpanga and Terefya. The succession to the chieftaincy is normally the same as commoner succession, i.e. brothers, then sons of the deceased, but the order need not be rigidly adhered to.[1]

Ngonde Traditional System

643 The section on history briefly indicated the position of the Kyungu. He was wealthy,
565 owing to the ivory trade, and used his wealth to maintain political links with the chiefs
and nobles of the country. At the same time he was kept in strict religious seclusion,
622 and the real government of the country was in the hands of the nobles of Ngonde,
631 a group of hereditary nobles, descendants of the original companions of the first Kyungu. The relations of the great chiefs (descendants of sons of Kyungus) and the territorial nobles to the capital allowed of considerable local autonomy, the Kyungu's prestige being mainly religious. Each territorial noble was succeeded by one son; each chief was succeeded by two or more sons, so that the chiefdoms tended to supplant the territorial nobles in importance and number, and the junior branches of the house of any one great chief formed a hierarchy based on descent. The great chiefs, at their accession, were recognized by the Kyungu with gifts of cloth, and they brought the junior chiefs of their house to perform hoeing service, *milasa*, for the Kyungu. Afterwards the junior chiefs performed *milasa* for their great chief, and were similarly rewarded with entertainment. The great chief might invite the territorial nobles in his neighbourhood to accompany him in performing *milasa*, but he could not command them as he could his junior chiefs. Apart from recognizing a certain authority of superior chiefs in judicial matters, and the right of the latter to command them to hoe, or in war, the junior chiefs had almost complete autonomy in their chiefdoms.[2]

622 Each chief had a traditional right to demand from his own subjects milk and bananas if he needed them, and to evict any man he pleased if he desired the site for his personal use or to give to a kinsman (not to a commoner), offering the evicted tenant another site.[3]

622 The chiefdom[4] consisted of a number of age-villages, older and younger men living
631 apart with their own contemporaries. At the head of each age-village was a headman
624 (called 'great commoner' by Wilson) chosen from among the villagers by the chief

[1] Cotland, 1914, pp. 44–5. [2] Wilson, 3, 1939, p. 24.
[3] Ibid., 3, 1938, pp. 48–9.
[4] In the absence of information I do not know whether the following description of Ngonde and Nyakyusa chiefdoms and age-villages is capable of a wider application.

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and the great commoners of the most senior villages. The constitution of a chiefdom was that of a limited monarchy, for the chief was dependent on his great commoners for his authority. All the way up the scale, with the exception of the Kyungu himself, each chief had his own great commoners and people directly subordinate to him. The organization of families and villages within the chiefdoms was the same as that of the Nyakyusa, but the organization of a territory ruled by a noble differed in that although there were always at least two age-villages, there were no great commoners.[1]

Villages vary in size, and average from forty to fifty households. In the first instance a boys' village is built on ground allotted to them by the village of their fathers, but a new allotment is made ceremoniously at the 'coming out', *ubusoka*, ceremony of the young chiefs, when the old chief and his great commoners formally allot a tract of land to each village of young men, and redraw the boundaries.

In every generation each chiefdom was divided into two (they were originally immigrant groups expanding their territory, and incorporating previous inhabitants). The chief at his accession, or 'coming out', married two 'great wives', whose eldest sons would each be one of his two heirs, and divide his chiefdom. The number of villages which 'came out' with each young chief varied between four and eight. If he was later reduced to a minor position he might be left with only one village of adult men, and one of their sons, as people tended to move away from minor chiefdoms. This was the system which obtained among the Nyakyusa and also among the Ngonde.[2] A summary of the 'coming out' ritual is given here, instead of in the section on ritual, as it indicates some of the features of the political organization.

Usually eight age-villages 'came out' at the same time, four under each of the young chiefs. At this occasion, some thirty years after the old chief's accession, eight new great commoners were chosen. The two young chiefs were secluded for a few hours in the hut of the old chief's first wife, and received magical treatment. Then they 'came out'. The boundaries of the age-villages were freshly drawn. After the 'coming out', each young chief, whether he was already married or not, married his two great wives, whose first sons would be his heirs. Girls who had not yet reached puberty were carried off from other chiefdoms with a show of force by the chief's men, who later sent cows of their own to regularize the position. The girls stayed at the home of one of the old chief's men until their first menstruation. They were initiated together, not at the house of their fathers, but in the country of their husbands; the old men and women of the country (contemporaries of the retiring chief) played the part usually played by the girl's parents and neighbours; the chief and his young men playing the usual part of the husband and his friends. After the ceremonies the girls were given as wives to the young chiefs, and separate huts were built for them in the two senior age-villages of the chiefdom. Wives married subsequently were attached in order of seniority to one or other of the two 'sides' of the chiefdom. Thus the four age-villages normally attached to a young chief were, from the first days of his official marriage, divided into two. If one of the two great wives bore no sons, the succession for that side of the chiefdom would pass to the son of the next senior wife of that side.

Between the 'coming out' of two young chiefs and the death of their own father, a delicate balance of prestige and power was maintained, secular power over their own age-villages passing to each young chief, while the old chief retained control over the

[1] Wilson, 5, 1939, pp. 22–4.

[2] Ibid., 3, 1938, pp. 12–15.

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622 secular affairs of his own age-villages and full supremacy in religious matters over all. Appeals in difficult cases might be taken from either of the young chiefs to the old chief and his great commoners. After his death, the wives and cows of the old chief were inherited by his full-brother, to whom also his religious authority passed. Full political power over their separate chiefdoms then went to the two sons. The great commoners of the old chief, relinquishing their secular functions to their successors, then entered on their religious duties as priests of the dead chief; this priesthood they handed on to their sons. When all the old chief's full-brothers were dead, the religious functions of chiefship passed to the young chiefs, who were then fully emancipated. The boundaries between their chiefdoms, settled at the 'coming out' ceremony, were sometimes modified by warfare.[1] The age-village is still the chief field of friendship, members recognizing greater obligations to each other than to outsiders; before the European administration the village was also a military unit.[2]

624 The great commoner of every village was very powerful, and measures existed to check his influence; for instance, no kinsman of a chief or son of a great commoner could be elected to that office. His duties were to be hospitable to the villagers, judge their cases, lead them in war, and officiate at their ceremonies. He represented their wishes to the chief, and through him and in consultation with him the chief gave his orders. Each great commoner was believed to be able to protect his own villagers from witchcraft.

Warfare

721 A state of war—actual or potential—always existed among the various Nyakyusa chiefdoms. Among the Ngonde, also, civil war was endemic, the Kyungu neither preventing it nor taking any part. In tribal warfare he did not remain impartial, but gave orders and told the chiefs to pray. They first called on the sacred groves of the buried Kyungus, and then each great chief called on his own predecessors for help. Although the territorial nobles also fought, they did not pray to their ancestors, for tribal war was carried on under royal auspices alone. War was an important source of revenue in cattle and slaves. The recurrent civil wars of the period before the Ngoni invasion show that in spite of the heirarchical façade the centralized political organization was not strong enough to overcome the local autonomy of the chiefdoms, except in the face of a common danger, such as the threat of Bemba or Ngoni invasion.[3]

Justice under the Traditional System of the Ngonde

692 There was no central court of appeal at Mbande to which the ordinary man could bring cases direct, or appeal against the decisions of his local chiefs. At the capital the only cases dealt with by the nobles of Ngonde were cases of treason against the Kyungu (mainly adulterous approach to his wives), which were summarily punished by death. They also used the Kyungu's authority in punitive expeditions against insubordinate chiefs. Each noble of Ngonde decided the cases in his own field. Each great chief held an appeal court to which cases from all the chiefdoms of his house came, for of all the descendants of the Kyungu the great chiefs alone had power to administer the poison ordeal. Some of the territorial nobles also had the power. It was resorted to not only in witchcraft cases, but in appeal cases when evidence for a legal decision was lacking.

[1] Wilson, 2, 1936, pp. 278–82. [2] Ibid., p. 276. [3] Ibid., 5, 1939, pp. 59–63.

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692 Many cases were of course decided by the common people among themselves, others by their great commoners, and others by the local chiefs sitting with their great commoners. Although there was no centralized judicial system, the political hierarchy of chiefdoms sometimes could be used to obtain redress in the case of a quarrel between men of different chiefdoms. The weakness of the system is indicated by the fact that restitution for wrong done was often obtained by the method of capturing a hostage.[1]

681 Witchcraft was punished by death. An adulterer, if caught, was killed by the husband. Deliberate murder required compensation up to ten head of cattle and the transfer of a woman, followed by a feast of reconciliation. If the murderer could not be caught a blood feud would be started, ending with a feast of formal reconciliation under the guidance of a diviner. Accidental homicide required compensation, but no feast of reconciliation, as there had been no malice. A cattle-thief caught red-handed might be killed on the spot; arson was settled by payment of compensation.[2]

Modern Government

622 642 643 (*a*) *Ngonde*. The British Government in Nyasaland at first applied the system of direct rule. Chiefs and nobles were recognized as 'village' or 'principal' headmen, performing executive duties for the Administration. The Kyungu was one of the 'principal' headmen, but was not recognized as Paramount. In 1924 the system was modified by the setting up of advisory councils in association with the headmen and the District Resident. The members of the councils were nominated and removable by the Government, and there was no intention of reviving tribal government.

In 1933 the system of Indirect Rule was introduced. The Kyungu was recognized as paramount chief, with an appeal court and five sub-chiefs under him. Of these, one, Kilupula. was over the northern part of the Ngonde plain, another ruled the Lambya in the extreme north-west, and the three others were distant territorial nobles ruling groups of alien stock in the hills. The nobles of Ngonde, with twelve prominent nobles and six other assessors, were recognized as members of the Kyungu's court and given nominal salaries. Those of the great chiefs of Ngonde who were not made sub-chiefs were officially termed 'important' headmen, and given nominal salaries. The other chiefs and territorial nobles were still termed 'village' headmen as before 1933. The Kyungu and the five sub-chiefs were each given an area and a court for the area. Village and important headmen could arbitrate in small cases but had no power to execute judgements. That power belonged to the courts alone. The Kyungu's court was also a court of appeal for the whole of Ngonde. A Native Treasury was established, into which one-twelfth of the tax was paid, but this was almost entirely expended on personal emoluments.

The full traditional constitution cannot be revived, as the religious beliefs which supported it have been superseded. Forty-five per cent. of the population profess Christianity, and even the belief in witchcraft, which operated in certain cases as a constitutional check, is less persistent than before. The native rulers are no longer believed to control the rain and the health and fertility of their people, so they stand or fall by the performance of their secular duties alone. Since the Kyungu has come out of religious seclusion the nobles of Ngonde are relegated to advisory status. The secularization of the constitution tends in this respect to make it more autocratic, both

[1] Wilson, S. 1939, p. 48–59.

[2] Mackenzie, 1925, pp. 82–90.

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622 642 643 in the relations between the Kyungu and the nobles, and in those between the local chiefs and their great commoners. On the other hand, there has been a reversal in the relative wealth of commoners and chiefs. The latter have had small salaries substituted for the proceeds of the ivory trade, food tribute, and the booty of war. The decline of polygyny has also reduced the relative wealth of the chiefs. The Kyungu's total official salary in 1937 was £72, and the salaries of sub-chiefs from £4. 10*s.* to £12 per annum. The nobles of Ngonde were paid from 10*s.* to 15*s.* per annum except Mulwa, who got 30*s.* These salaries do not permit of lavish entertainment and gifts to subordinates, and the rulers suffer a consequent loss of prestige. Each village headman is allowed 3*d.* in the tax paid by every adult male subject, and, in addition, the 'important' headmen (former great chiefs) receive subsidies averaging about 10*s.* per annum. These payments have replaced the traditional right to requisition food. Commoners are frequently richer than their rulers. The head clerk in the Boma got £52 in 1937, and fifty-three other government employees got £12 or more. Young men from the goldmines and native Christian ministers now earn more than do the former great chiefs.

By using his private fortune the present Kyungu has been able to maintain the prestige of his office. He revived the *milasa*, hoeing custom, in 1927 on a new basis. To each chief who hoed for him he presented a cow, bought out of the proceeds of the sale of the produce of their labours. The *milasa* profit also enabled him to buy cloth for funeral gifts, a custom which he extended considerably, giving cloths not only at the death of the chiefs, but also to everyone who dies in his part of the plain of Ngonde. The present constitution of Ngonde is more autocratic and more centralized than the old, and thanks to his wealth the Kyungu's secular power is greater than that of his predecessors, in relation to the nobles of Ngonde, and to the chiefs and territorial nobles.

The 'coming out' has ceased since 1913, owing to the smallness of all the present chiefdoms, and the impossibility of finding enough land and followers for two successors to any local chief. Each chief is now succeeded by a brother or one son only. Subjects are still free to move away from the area of an unpopular headmen, thereby reducing his salary by 3*d.* per annum.[1] Although the Nyasaland–Tanganyika boundary cuts his sphere of influence, the Kyungu is still often consulted on tribal affairs across the border.[2]

622 642 (*b*) *Nyakyusa.* The government of Tanganyika Territory has grouped the 100 or so traditionally independent chiefs into eleven court districts, with one chief as President of the Native Court in each. These eleven chiefs, together with the two presidents of the Ndali and Lambya courts, are federated, and have an appeal court and joint Native Treasury of their own. In the eleven native courts most of the traditionally sovereign chiefs are entitled to sit with their great commoners, and assist the President and his great commoners in the hearing of cases. The bulk of the legal business previously transacted by each chief in his own country is now taken to court, but the power of the great commoners to settle disputes by arbitration in their separate villages is still the basis of the legal system. A poll tax, fixed at 9*s.* per annum (1938) for adult males, was introduced, and chiefs are paid small salaries, ranging from 5*s.*, 10*s.*, or 20*s.* a month for ordinary chiefs, to 80*s.* or 100*s.* a month for court presidents.[3]

[1] Wilson, 5, 1939, pp. 69–85.
[2] *Native Affairs Report*, 1933, p. 6.
[3] Wilson, 3, 1938, p. 15.

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17

MAIN CULTURAL FEATURES

RELIGION

769 The ancestor cult was the main feature of Ngonde religion. As long as a man had alive a father, father's full brother, or a senior brother, this senior kinsman dealt with the ancestral spirits, not only on his behalf, but also on behalf of his wives and children. In the absence of sickness or misfortune no appeal was made to the spirits. If the diviner diagnosed anger of the ancestors as cause, the senior kinsman had to pray for the sick one. If the half-brothers lived at a distance from each other after the death of their father and uncles, each might pray to the spirits to cure a little sickness, but if it persisted a message had to be sent to the senior kinsman. Wrongs which aroused the anger of the spirits were usually breaches of family morality, insult to a father, neglect of responsibilities by an heir. Offerings consisted of a bull, hen, or beer in the case of commoners, a cow in the case of a chief. The worship of dead chiefs as such was not connected with everyday morality. On the offering of cows by chiefs to their immediate ancestors depended the food and health of the chiefdom and the fertility of women and cows.[1]

769 643 Each Kyungu was buried in the valley around Mbande, and the grave was planted with trees, making a sacred grove. In times of drought and widespread sickness, sacrifices were made at the groves under the guidance of a diviner.[2] An insult to the living Kyungu was believed to cause a drought. Each chief or noble was believed to be able to avert local misfortunes for his own people, and the head of every family participated in the divinity of his own ancestors. The great commoners of each chief were believed to have independent access to his ancestral spirits, and so to have a hold upon him. The nobles of Ngonde had a similar power over the Kyungu.

643 As the Kyungu's health was bound up with the welfare of the community, elaborate precautions to maintain his health and to protect him from the danger of sexual impurity were taken, and when he ailed he was killed by suffocation.[3]

778 Sacred lagoons by the lake were associated not with the ancestors, but with a vague supreme deity, *Mbamba*.[4]

796 There were two important annual rituals for the whole tribe in addition to the special sacrifices to avert misfortune. One was the clearing out of the ashes each year after the break of the rains, which was performed on the order of the Kyungu, given through the nobles of Ngonde. The second was the elaborate first-fruits ceremony: fruits were offered by the nobles of Ngonde, in the grove of the last dead Kyungu, and then by the great chiefs, each in the grove of his own predecessor. The nobles and the chiefs of the hills had similar rituals, but they were not synchronized with those of the plain.[5]

WITCHCRAFT

754 626 The Ngonde believe that certain men and women have the power of harming their neighbours and neighbours' cattle without taking any overt action. The witchcraft is hereditary, and of particular virulence if inherited through the mother.[6] Witches exert their influence at night in dreams. There are two kinds of witches, *avamanga*, defender

[1] Wilson, 2, 1936, pp. 256–7; 1, 1936, p. 84; Mackenzie, 1925, pp. 191 and 196, also Ch. VII.
[2] Wilson, 5, 1939, pp. 29–30.
[3] Ibid., pp. 34–6.
[4] Ibid., p. 34; Mackenzie, 1925, pp. 178–97.
[5] Wilson, 5, 1939, pp. 29–34.
[6] Mackenzie, 1925, pp. 250–69.

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17

witches, who use their power beneficently and spend their dreams in efforts to counteract the aggressor witches, *avalosi*, who use their power maliciously. The great commoner is the strongest of the former type, and the 'defender of the village'. A man who earns universal unpopularity is subject to a spiritual attack from the 'defenders', and is liable to fall sick from the blast of unpopularity. Belief in this efficacy of the 'breath of men' is one of the sanctions of the accepted social order.[1]

Only magic is believed to have power to punish wrongdoers who are neither kinsmen nor members of the same chiefdom. Magic exerts an influence on the behaviour of kinsmen and affines. The witchcraft of a neglected wife may cause a man to fall sick, or that of his father-in-law may harm his children.[2] The power of witchcraft never acts between relatives, though it might between husband and wife.[3]

An aggressor witch was reported in the old days by the great commoner to the chief, who ordered the poison ordeal. If the accused failed to vomit (the dose was seldom fatal), he was proved guilty and killed or exiled, all his cows and property being taken by the chief and the victims of his aggressive witchcraft. If a private individual accused another, both were put to the ordeal; if both vomited, the accuser had to pay two cows to the other for slander; if either failed to vomit he was punished as guilty. The ordeal is now illegal, but men accused of aggressive witchcraft still find it best to fly the chiefdom. Great commoners normally used their witchcraft powers to protect their chief from attack, but if he erred they would join in the attack on him; the nobles of Ngonde had power to exert a similar constitutional check on the Kyungu.[4]

If death by aggressive witchcraft was suspected, it was proved or disproved by a routine post-mortem examination and by subsequent consultation with the diviner.[5]

Birth

A child should be born in its own father's house. A difficult birth is a sign of the guilt of adultery, and is eased by confession.[6] A few days after the birth the mother is anointed, shaved, and resumes her household duties. She later goes on a visit of some weeks to show the child to her own parents, returning to her husband after celebration by both sets of grandparents, and exchanges of food and hoes. The birth of twins was a great misfortune, requiring the segregation and ritual purification of both parents.[7]

Initiation

There was no puberty or initiation rite for boys. The initiation of a girl was really a pre-marriage rite. She went through a complicated rite to ensure fertility, in which the husband took part. The initiation lasts some months, and includes several exchanges of food between the families of the girl and her betrothed husband, and ceremonies in which her girl friends of the same village and his friends of his village take part. The girl is tested for virginity during the ceremonies. If she is not betrothed before puberty the initiation is carried out in a modified form, but the full significance is lost.[8]

[1] Wilson, 2, 1936, p. 277. [2] Ibid., p. 256. [3] Ibid., 1, 1936, p. 91.
[4] Ibid., 5, 1939, p. 38. [5] Johnston, 1897, p. 443.
[6] Wilson and Hunter, 1939, p. 10; Mackenzie, 1925, pp. 42–3.
[7] Ibid., pp. 44–8. According to H. H. Johnston, if the children died in succession the father was expected to kill himself, but it is possible that he is recounting a custom of the Southern Tumbuka (1897, p. 417).
[8] Ibid., 1925, p. 51; Wilson and Hunter, 1939, p. 11; Wilson, 2, 1936, p. 258.

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17

BURIAL

764 The death of any ordinary commoner and those of less important great commoners were announced to their local chiefs. On the death of a chief or noble or of a prominent great commoner, a hen was sent to the Kyungu to announce the death, and he returned one of the cloths obtained from the Arabs. If a prominent commoner or great commoner died, the great chief got a hen and sent a cloth. The funeral of the Kyungu was secretly carried out by the nobles of Ngonde.[1]

Attendance at ceremonies is a constituent factor of kinship and affinity. Attendance at burial is obligatory for members of the same village. Messages are sent to all the fathers-in-law and all the sons-in-law of the dead man, and of the senior kinsman who buries him, to all the dead man's full and half-brothers, to the husbands of his sisters, to any classificatory brothers with whom he has exchanged cows, to his mother's father, or brother, and to full and half-brothers of his father, and to his sons. These, with their wives and older children, are obliged to come. A chief normally goes to all burials in his chiefdom (excepting those of very young children), and a special part of the burial meat is given to him.

The ceremonies last about a month, starting with the burial ceremonies of three or four days. Any contact with the dead body is considered to be magically dangerous, and to require special purification. A few personal possessions are buried with the body. The funeral rites are believed to enable a man to join his ancestors. To decide the cause of death by studying the condition of the intestines, a post-mortem examination was formerly always made, the diagnosis afterwards being checked by the diviner. The ceremonies end with war dances (now become rather dances of sexual display), and with the killing of cattle to feed the mourners and honour the dead.

At all except the poorest burials, one or more head of cattle is killed. Not only the immediate family, but also the fathers of the dead man's wives and the husbands of his full-sisters and daughters are expected to provide cows for killing, and if he is buried at his father's place, the father's affinal relations are expected to bring cows. More cows are killed for a man than for a woman, but her husband and father are both supposed to provide a cow for her burial. The heir, when the inheritance is settled, should kill the beasts, and thereby establish his claim if doubt arises later. Many relatives and friends bring cloths, some of which are buried with the dead; others are kept by his family. The banana groves of the dead are in part destroyed. A month after the funeral there is a commemorative beer feast and some beer is taken to the grave as an offering. After mourning all relatives and friends of the dead shave their heads.[2]

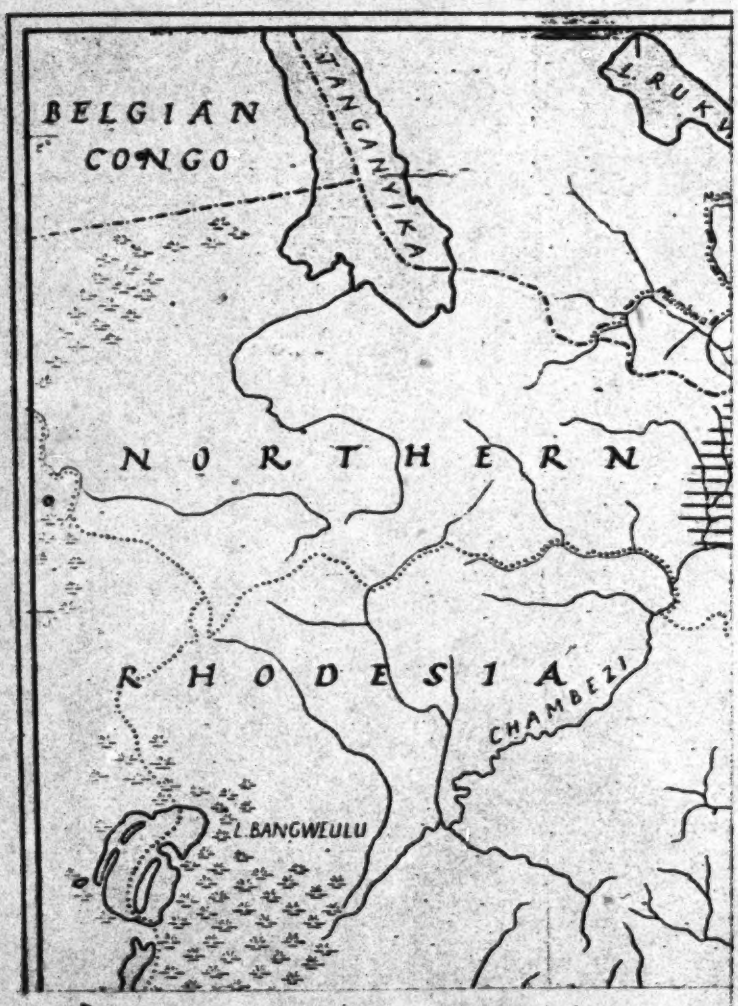
UTANI 1/1

764 602 According to Moreau, the Nyakyusa can cite three or more tribes having *utani* alliances with them. They also have *utani* relations between clans and between individuals. When a burial takes place, every *utani* within reach is under at least as strong an obligation as any relative to attend the funeral and to contribute to the expenses.[3]

[1] Wilson, 5, 1939, p. 66. According to Dr. Kerr-Cross, 1894, p. 189, the Ngonde used to bury people alive with the Kyungu.
[2] Mackenzie, 1925, pp. 292 03.; Wilson, 4, 1939; Johnston, 1897, pp. 443-5.
[3] Moreau, 1941, pp. 5-6.

1/1 [A type of joking relationship.— Analyst]

131



[End paper map A]

131

[End paper map B]

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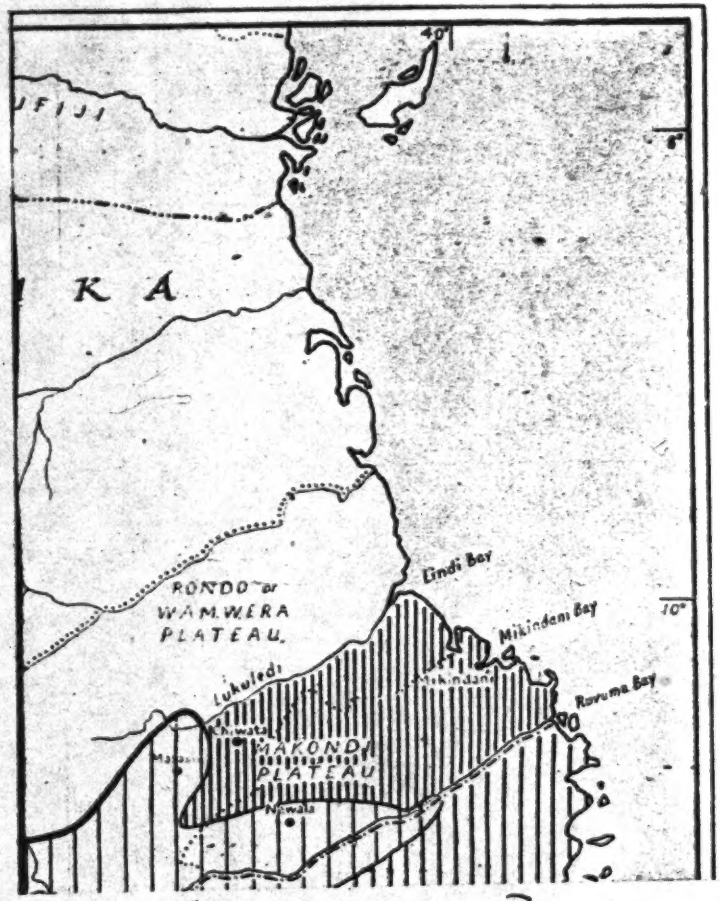
[End paper map C]

13|



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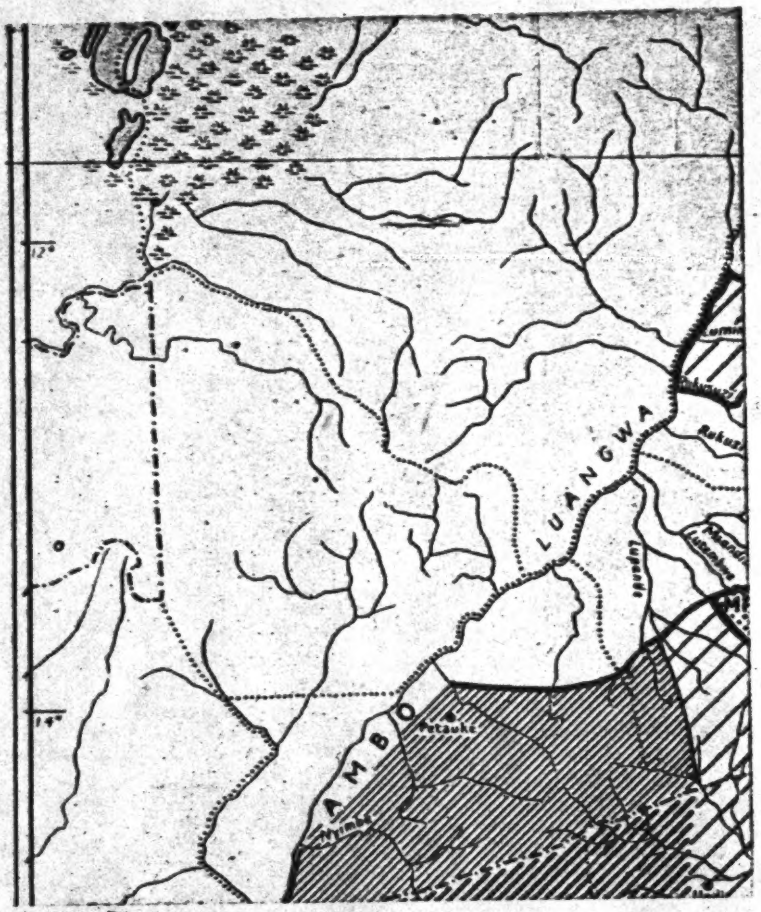
4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17

131



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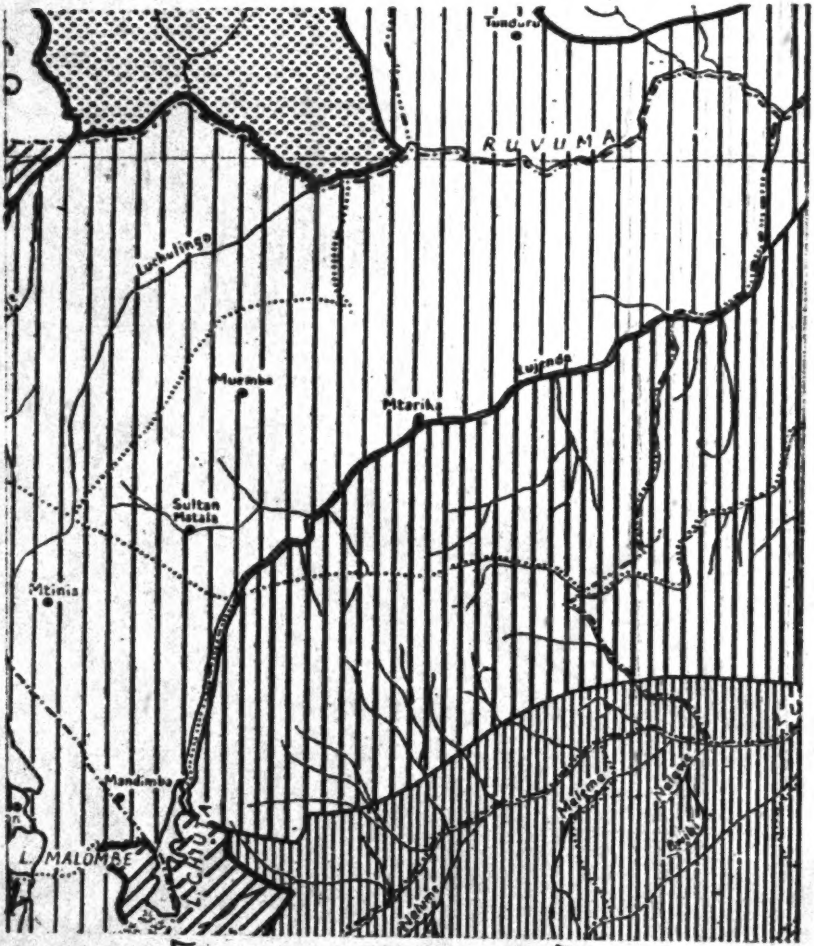
4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17

[31]

LAKE NYASA
Chilumba
Karonga
Mlanje
Lundazi
Lumimba
Lumeche
Chikuzi
Mzimba
NGONI
Mwenzo
Mlangeni
Fort Hill
Fort Maguire
Fort Manning
Fort Jameson
Fort Lister
Fort Rosebery
Fort Young
Fort Hawkins
Fort Johnston
Fort Lawley
Fort Lugard
Fort Manning
Fort Maguire

131



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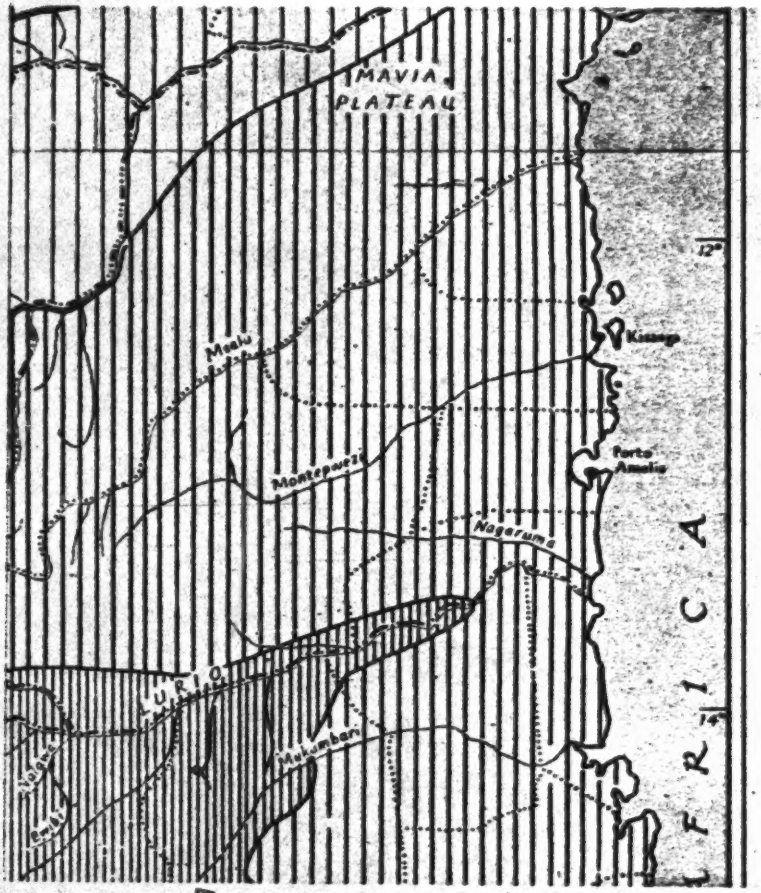

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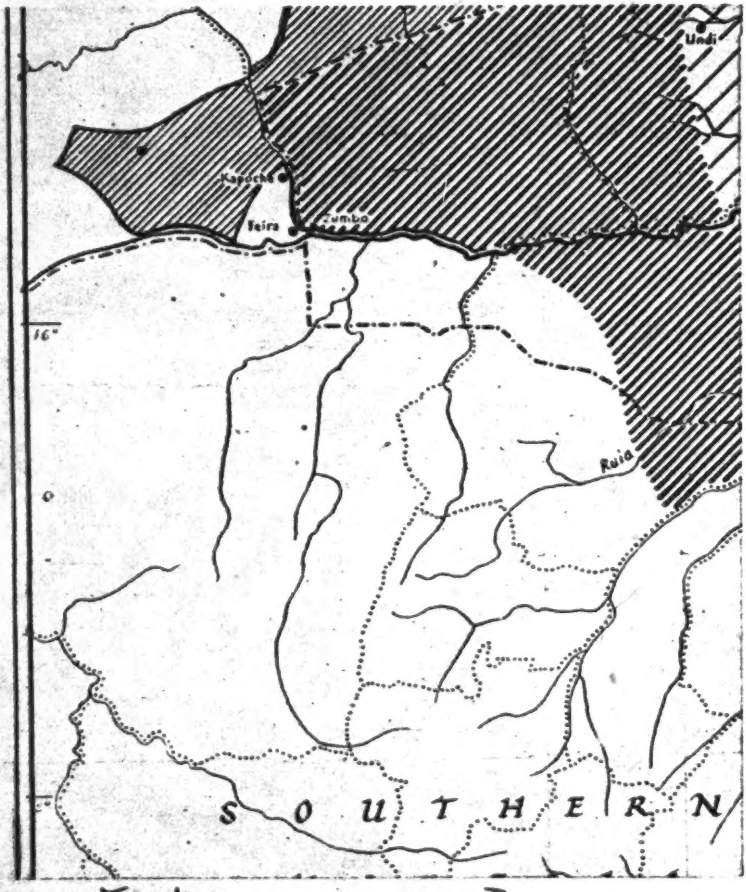

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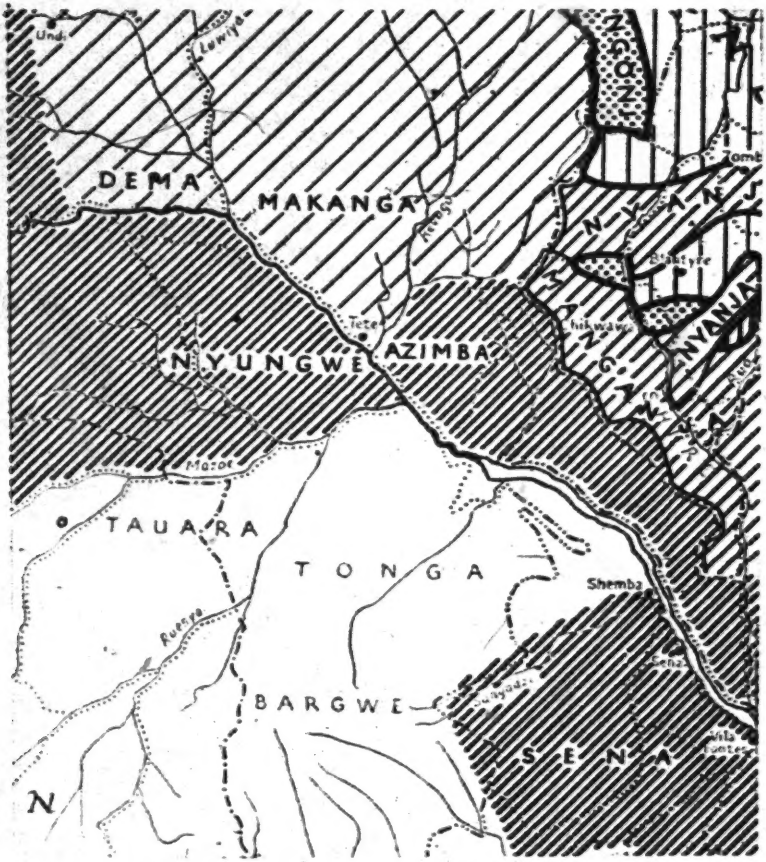
131



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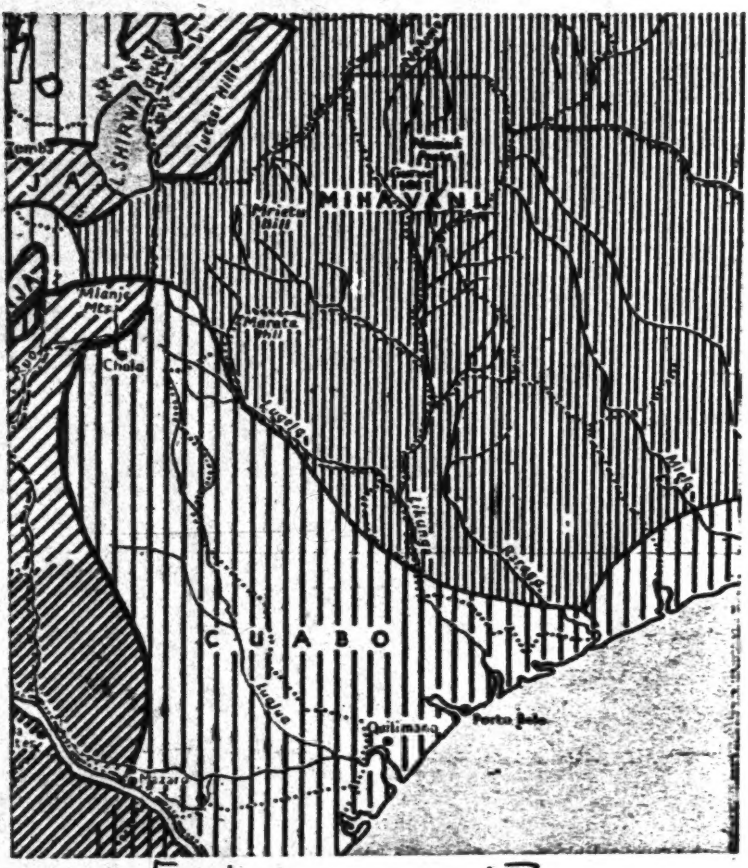
131



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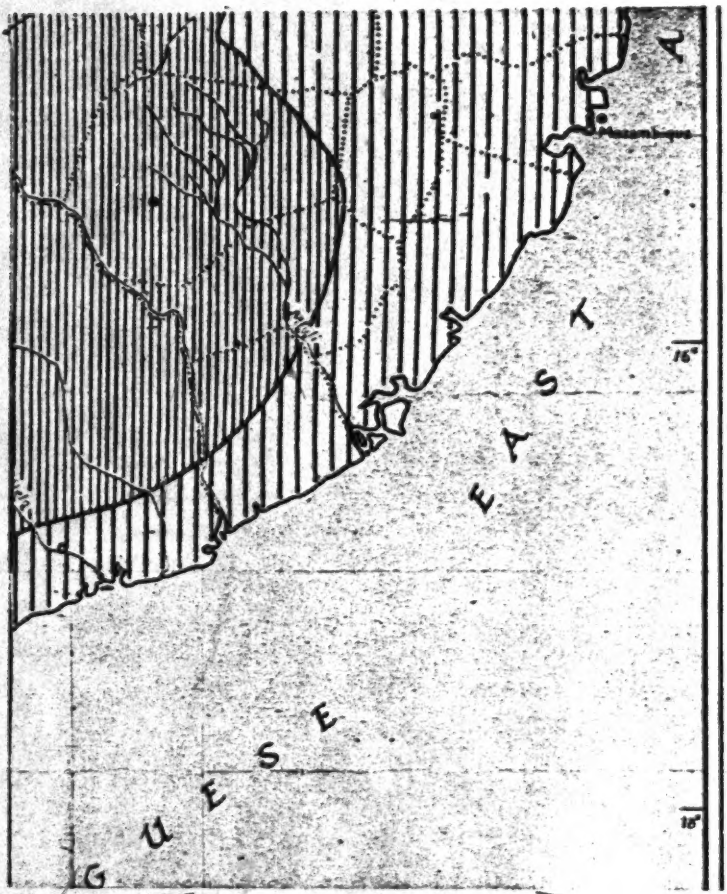
4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17

B1



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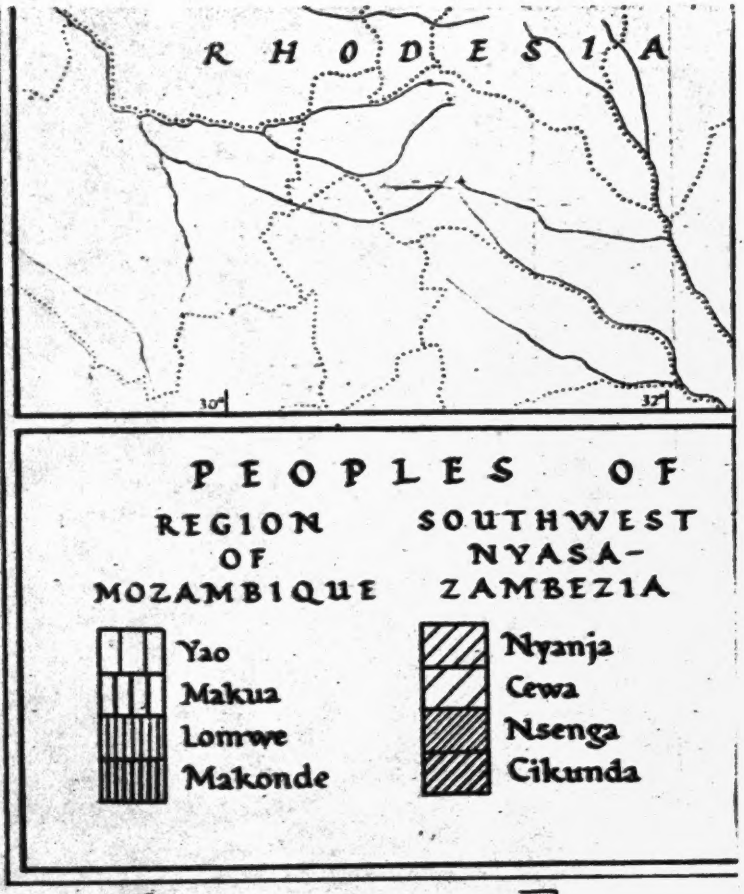
131



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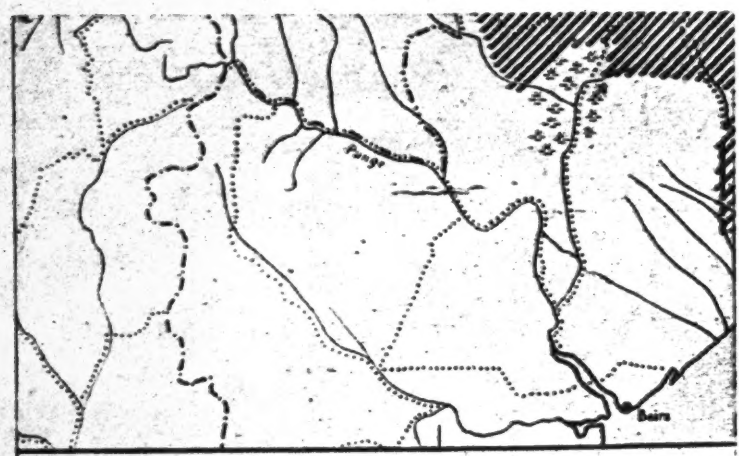
131



THE LAKE NYA

NORTHWEST NYASA-LUNDAZI REGION

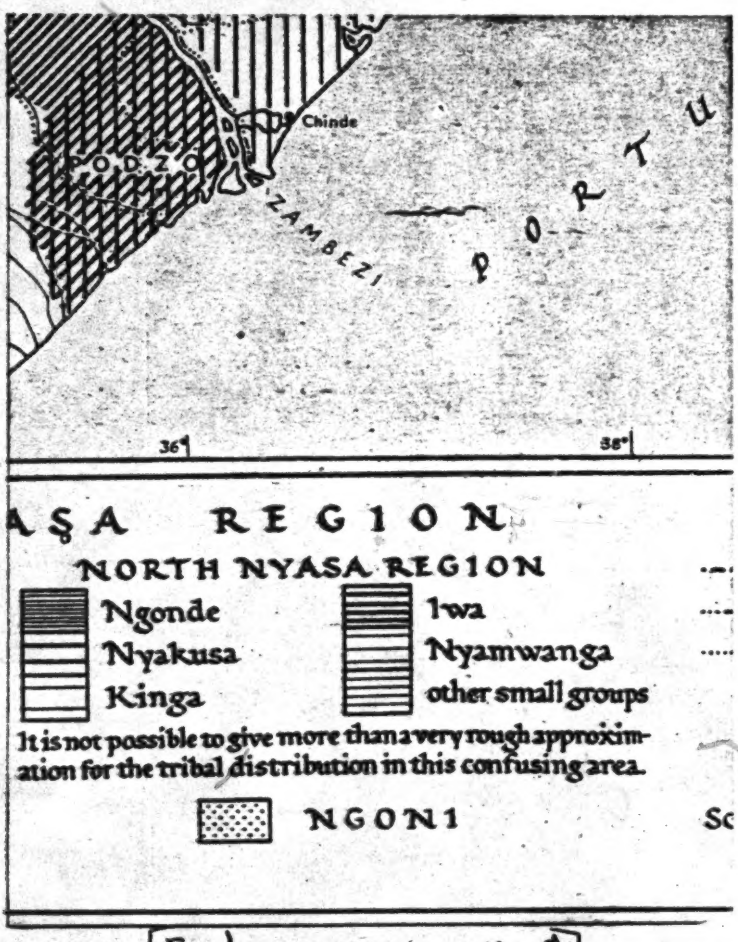
Tumbuka
Kamanga
Henga
Tonga
Sisya
Kandawire

Fulilwa
Nthali, Phoka,
Yombe [Hewe
Wenya
Fungwe
Nyika

Iti
ati

[End paper map N]

(3)



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4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17

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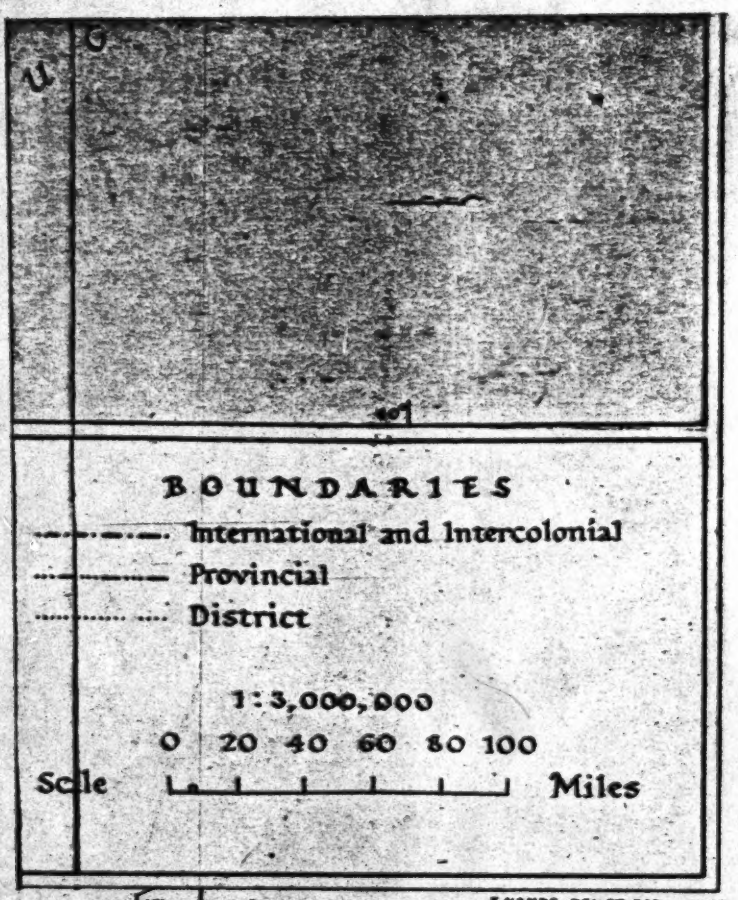

[End paper map P]